

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 7346

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI

SUBJECT: GOWON VISIT

REF: LAGOS 6582

SUMMARY: MEA PERMANENT SECRETARY JOE IYALLA OUTLINED PROSPECTIVE SCHEDULE GENERAL GOWON DURING VISIT TO UNITED STATES OCTOBER 4-7/8. SUBSTANTIAL VARIATION FROM COMMISSIONER ARIKPO'S "ASSURANCE." ANSWER TO PRESIDENT'S LETTER PROMISED SEPTEMBER 10 UPON GOWON'S RETURN FROM ALGIERS. OCTOBER 6 SEEMS BE ONLY POSSIBLE DATE FOR WASHINGTON VISIT.

1. TODAY I CALLED ON IYALLA, AT HIS REQUEST, TO RECEIVE FMG TENTATIVE PLANNING FOR FORTHCOMING TRIP TO NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON. BEFORE PERMANENT SECRETARY OUTLINED HIS PROPOSALS, I INDICATED THAT I COULD NOT DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS UNTIL AFTER PRESIDENT'S LETTER ANSWERED AND A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME FOUND FOR VISIT. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD, APOLIGIZED FOR DELAY IN REPLYING, AND "GRARANTEED" DELIVER ANSWER TO ME SEPTEMBER 10 UPON GOWON'S RETURN SEPTEMBER 9 FROM ALGIERS.

2. STILL, IYALLA WAS "CERTAIN" THAT FOLLOWING PROPOSALS CAN BE BASIS USG "TENTATIVE PLANNING" IF MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME FOUND FOR GOWON'S CALL ON PRESIDENT: FMG PARTY WILL ARRIVE NEW YORK OCTOBER 4 (TRAVELING IN NIGERIA AIRWAYS 707) EARLY ENOUGH PARTICIPATE IN ROUND OF CALLS AND RECEPTIONS ARRANGED BY PERCY SUTTON, WHO IN BEST POSITION ASSEMBLE "NEW YORK CITIZENS OF INTEREST TO US." ONLY OTHER SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION THESE INTERESTS WAS AFRICAN AMERICAN CHAMBER
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COMMERCE.

3. ENTIRE DAY AND EVENING OCTOBER 5 IN NEW YORK. GOWON TO ADDRESS UNGA AT 1030 AM, REPEAT 1030 AM HE SAID. EXPECTS (BUT APPARENTLY NOT SET) SECRETARY GENERAL "OFFER TRADITIONAL LUNCHEON FOR OAU CHAIRMAN." WILL OFFICIALLY CALL ON PRESIDENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY "SO HE WON'T BE OFFENDED." MAKE ANY OTHER "NECESSARY" UN CALLS. ARRANGEMENTS "PRACTICALLY MADE" FOR GOWN APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS LATE AFTERNOON. FMG PLANS "SOME KIND OF RECEPTION" IN THE EVENING. THROUGHOUT NEW YORK STAY, PARTY WILL RESIDE AT WALDORF "IF WE CAN GET RESERVATIONS."

4. PROPOSE SPEND ALL DAY OF OCTOBER 6 IN WASHINGTON, RETURN-INGO TO NEW YORK AFTER EVENING FUNCTION TO BE ARRANGED BY NIGERIAN EMBASSY. IYALLA, CAREFULLY SPEAKING FOR GOWON HE SAID, HOPES THAT PRESIDENT WILL KINDLY RECEIVE HEAD OF STATE AND OAU CHAIRMAN FOR "LENGTHY TALK," THOUGH HE REALIZES THAT SATURDAY MUST BE MOST INCONVENIENT TIME FOR PRESIDENT. GOWON STILL FULLY PLANS LATER "ACCEPT OUTSTANDING INVITATION MAKE STATE VISIT" BUT HOPES PRESIDENT WILL BE ABLE FIT HIM INTO HIS BUSY SCHEDULE OCTOBER 6. INDEED, VISIT NEED NOT TAKE PLACE WASHINGTON IF SOME OTHER LOCALE MORE CONVENIENT FOR PRESIDENT (IYALLA NEVER SPECIFIC THIS POINT, BUT CLEARLY HAD CAMP DAVID IN MIND). AFTER TALK WITH PRESIDENT, GOWON WOULD HOPE CALL ON SENATOR BROOKE AND MEMBERS OF BLACK CAUCUS PRIOR TO EVENING RECEPTION. AFTER SPENDING NIGHT OCTOBER 6 IN NEW YORK, PARTY WOULD DEPART FOR LAGOS OCTOBER 7 OR "MAYBE MORNING OCTOBER 8, IF THE GENERAL IS TOO TIRED." INCIDENTALLY, IYALLA WOULD HOPE THAT USG MAY BE ABLE ASSIST IN ARRANGING INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION, SECURITY, AND "OTHER FACILITATIONS," BUT WE COULD DISCUSS THESE MATTERS LATER.

5. IN REPLY TO HIS OUTLINE, I STATED THAT FMG SEEMED TO HAVE DONE "CONSIDERABLE UNILATERAL PLANNING" BEFORE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTEABLE TIME FOUND. WHILE I HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER 6, I HOPED THAT FMG HAD NOT MADE ANY ARRANGEMENTS IN WASHINGTON FOR THAT DATE WITH EXPECTATION PRESIDENT WOULD EITHER ASSURE THAT A CALL COULD BE MADE OR ALTER HIS SCHEDULE IN LIGHT OF "OTHER FMG PLANNING." IYALLA ASSURED ME THAT NO PLANS HAD BEEN MADE

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FOR OCTOBER 6 AND THAT HIS SPECIFIC REFERENCES ONLY REPRESENTED "THOUGHTS." I ALSO STATED THAT I WAS CERTAIN NO PLANS COULD BE ENTERTAINED UNTIL "THE NOW MONTH-OLD LETTER IS ANSWERED." WE SIMPLY COULD NOT WORK ON BASIS ORAL STATEMENTS, INCLUDING HIS TODAY, AND ARIKPO'S "ASSURANCES" ABOUT THE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 5 ILLUSTRATED MY POINT. HE WAS SORRY THAT "DR ARIKPO, A POOR MAN WITH MANY BURDENS, GOT MIXED UP." PULLING A COPY OF A PLANNING SCHEDULE FROM HIS DESK, HE SOUGHT

TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE WAS NOT MIXED UP. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT WHEREAS THE PRESIDENT'S CONVENIENCE WOULD BE THE FMG'S CONVENIENCE, THE NIGERIANS WOULD FEEL FREE TO ARRANGE, WITH OUR KIND ASSISTANCE, POST-PRESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES BECAUSE GOWON WOULD NOT BE ON A STATE VISIT. I SUGGESTED THAT AS FAR AS OCTOBER 6 IS CONCERNED, WE DEFER ANY DISCUSSION OF SPECIFICS UNTIL WE BOTH KNEW MORE ABOUT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME. I CLOSED MY REPLY BY REPEATING A STRAIGHT NO ANSWER-NO PLANNING UNDERSTANDING, TO WHICH HE READILY ASSENTED WITH A "GUARANTEE" THAT I WOULD HAVE AN ANSWER FOR TRANSMISSION TO WASHINGTON ON SEPTEMBER 10: "IN FACT, THE REPLY IS READY; ALL WE NEED IS THE GENERAL'S SIGNATURE WHEN HE RETURNS FROM ALGIERS SUNDAY."

6. COMMENT: IYALLA WAS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY MILD TODAY AND CHARACTERISTICALLY ASSURED, SMOOTH, AND SECREITIVE OF MOTIVATIONS. IN SHORT, HE IS THE PRIME PRACTITIONER OF NIGERIANISM. UNLIKE ARIKPO, OR EVEN AHMADU IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, HE WAS TOTALLY CONVINCING, HE RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF A WRITTEN ANSWER, AND HE WILL PRODUCE ONE, MAYBE NOT SEPTEMBER 10, WHICH WOULD BE TOO PROMPT AND TOO UNNIGERIAN, BUT ALMOST CERTAINLY SEPTEMBER 11, OR 12, OR 13, OR SOME TIME SOON ON THE LAGOS SCALE. FURTHER, HIS OUTLINE OF TIMING IS MORE DEPENDABLE THAN ARIKPO'S: HE DID NOT NEED TO MAKE A TELEPHONE CALL (LAGOS 6870) OR DO MORE THAN REFER TO HIS NOTES, FROM WHICH HE READ AT SEVERAL POINTS. WE ARE LEFT TO GUESS WHY HE DID NOT EARLIER CARRY OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS HE APPARENTLY HAD RECEIVED FROM ARIKPO OR SOMEONE (LAGOS 6809).

7. THE INITIATED WILL BE UNFRUSTRATED BY THE ABNORMALITIES WHICH THE NIGERIANS PRESENT TO ALL WHO ATTEMPT TO TRANSACT NORMAL DIPLOMATIC BUSINESS. INITIATED AND UNINITIATED ALIKE, I HOPE, WILL APPRECIATE THE NEED TO TOLERATE SOME DEGREE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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DIPLOMATIC ABERRATIONS: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND GOWON-NIGERIAN INFLUENCE LOOM LARGE, AT LEAST IN LAGOS.

8. OCTOBER 6 WOULD SEEM TO BE THE ONLY FEASIBLE DATE, AND AM CONVINCED THAT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLANNING CAN SAFELY BE MADE. REINHARDT

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER INSTRUCTIONS SS-O,
MR. SARROS.

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